

# „Winterthur Life & Pensions Develops Corporation MIS with MIKsolution+“

**Perfectly attuned to current needs, but also flexible enough to satisfy future demands: Winterthur Life &**



**Winterthur Life & Pensions specializes in extensive traditional and customized solutions for life insurance and retirement pensions.**

**Pensions' new Management Information System (MIS) would have to cover a wide range of requirements. Using MIK-OLAP, MIK-ONE, and MIK-dynaSight®, the Swiss insurance company created a flexible system that now provides some 300 employees in 24 countries with access to reports and queries. But a new assignment already awaits completion: a second MIS – partially standardized and partially optimized for country-specific requirements – that will support the company's branch offices in the various countries as they analyze their local data.**

First, the life insurance sector was deregulated. Then came a merger with Credit Suisse, which resulted in a number of reorganizations: Winterthur Life & Pensions, one of Switzer-

land's major life insurance companies, had to cope with a multitude of changes in its business environment over the past 10 years. Today, Winterthur Life & Pensions is in charge of the Credit Suisse Group's life insurance business worldwide: a specialist working in association with a powerful group.

## New Assignments for the Reporting System

"If you want to accomplish your goals, you have to have efficient tools in order to measure your progress", says Susanna Marti Calmell, Head of MIS & Reporting at Winterthur Life & Pensions. "Introducing an effective reporting system was a top priority in implementing our new global focus. But this reporting system had to do more than just optimize our reports: as a Management Information System, it also had to provide our management with the important information they would need to make their decisions."

Of course, another reason for using an MIS that

### Winterthur Life & Pensions

**Winterthur Life & Pensions is in charge of the Credit Suisse Group's global sales of life insurance policies. As of 2001, Winterthur Life & Pensions is the second largest life insurance company in Switzerland, the 12th largest in Europe, and the 17th largest worldwide. It manages assets of over 100 billion Swiss francs. With a 13% increase in gross premiums registered in 2001 alone, Winterthur Life & Pensions is clearly growing stronger than its competitors. The company employs a staff of 7,570 and has 8,300 insurance agents under contract. Additional information regarding Winterthur Life & Pensions is available on the Internet at [www.winterthur.ch](http://www.winterthur.ch).**

supplies up-to-date figures was the merger with Credit Suisse and the resulting introduction of new reporting standards. "A bank is accustomed to obtaining detailed information regarding current figures", states Susanna Marti Calmell, adding, "This is possible because all transactions are posted immediately following completion, and historical data can be extrapolated in a highly accurate manner."

The life insurance business, on the other hand, is different. "On average, there are 20 to 30 years between the date a policy is taken out and the date of its termination, but no one can predict whether the life insurance can be paid out at the end of the agreed-upon term as planned, or whether an insured event will occur before then", says Susanna



**Winterthur Life & Pensions' Corporate Head Office in Winterthur, Switzerland.**

Marti Calmell. As a result, Winterthur used to place less emphasis on current figures but instead focused on arming itself against unforeseen events with risk analyses, statistical analyses, and sufficient reserves.

However, the merger with Credit Suisse required that a group-wide standard be found. For Winterthur, this meant that its employees had to regularly send periodic reports to the group's head office, as well. Therefore, in 2001, when Susanna Marti Calmell and her group were commissioned with introducing this type of system, the primary concern was that it be implemented quickly. "We had to manage with the tools that were already in use, and because of the acute need for action, the new solution had to be developed by my team independently", Susanna Marti Calmell recalls.

The right tool was soon found: MIKsolution+. In this case, MIK-OLAP would function as a database, while MIK-ONE and MIK-dynaSight® would work as frontends. These tools had been in use at Winterthur for many years and satisfied the flexibility requirements of the desired solution.

“One great advantage of MIKsolution+ is that end users can also employ the tools effectively”, Susanna Marti Calmell confirms. “As a result, specialists from a wide range of areas can implement task-specific solutions on their own.”

## A Group-wide Database

Nevertheless, while the MIK tools afford the controlling department substantial independence from the IT department, this project required close cooperation.

“The new MIS would have to be integrated as much as possible into the Credit Suisse Group's standard IT architecture”, Susanna Marti Calmell explains. “Other requirements included simplified and automated data sourcing, the direct hook-up of primary systems, and stable archiving.”

The data source function is performed by an information pool – a Data Warehouse that the IT department installed using Oracle as the base. Information from group-wide databases, as well as Excel sheets from the various branches, go through quality checks, are processed, and are imported into the Oracle database. From there, they are transferred at monthly or quarterly intervals to the OLAP cubes entitled “Financial Figures”, “HR”, and “Operations” (depending on subject area) for purposes of evaluation and analysis.

In the area of data platforms, IT and MIS business teams work together in close cooperation. “Our users come from a wide range of areas”, Susanna Marti Calmell reports. “Specialists who create their standard reports using MIKsolution+, analysts who use MIK software to answer specific questions, and managers who call up important figures. In addition, access to the database is administered in a personalized manner. For purposes of presenting and analyzing data, we provide our users with MIK-ONE/MIK-XLREPORT and MIK-dynaSight®, two tools with different options that users employ depending on their

specific tasks.” MIK-ONE/MIK-XLREPORT enables power users to call up predefined reports and queries, modify them, generate their own queries and reports, and edit the data obtained. Most notably, the graphic presentation supports power users' analysis work. Using MIK-dynaSight®, top management can call up predefined screens and thus access important data quickly.

## MIS in Two Phases

At present, 300 users (including 100 power users) in 24 countries can use MIK-dynaSight® to access the head office's MIS. From the very outset, users greatly welcomed

the new system. This is because its ease-of-use quickly enabled all users to get along with the tools and to obtain the information they really needed – in just the right format – whenever they made queries. Nevertheless, Susanna Marti Calmell realizes that only a portion of the potential of MIKsolution+ has been tapped so far. “We use the MIS primarily as a reporting tool; yet the analysis area, which is one of the greatest strengths of MIKsolution+, is still not being used nearly enough.”

This is mainly because there is still too little comparative data, which is required for such things as extrapolations or simulations.



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Susanna Marti Calmell, Head of MIS & Reporting at Winterthur Life & Pensions.

## Phase II: The Country-Rollout

For Susanna Marti Calmell, developing the head office's MIS was just the first step. “Granted, using MIKsolution+, we succeeded in creating a system that is used worldwide, but in the end, it was mainly optimized for our head office. The next step is to support the companies in the various countries as they set up local MIS. These will focus primarily on local requirements, which nevertheless must also be in line with the system already in use by our head office.”

The concept for these local Management Information Systems is based on a three-layer model. The first layer – the heart of the application – contains all components required for corporate reporting. The second layer stores data that is of interest to several branch offices. These modules can be developed once and then used over and over again. Finally, the third layer covers the country-specific characteristics, thus making it a flexible module that can be quickly adapted to the various requirements of the individual countries. “Our current plan is to develop local MIS in two countries as prototypes and to use the experience gained in the process as a basis for a rollout at the remaining companies”, says Susanna Marti Calmell.

## Contacts

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